

The Neighborhood Design Center Seeks Innovative Concepts and Ideas for *Design for Distancing: Reopening Baltimore Together*, a Tactical Public Health and Business Recovery Initiative for Charm City and the World

Baltimore, May 29, 2020 – Today the Neighborhood Design Center (NDC) has launched the design competition for *Design for Distancing: Reopening Baltimore Together* (www.designfordistancing.org), a tactical design initiative intended to help the city’s small businesses reopen without compromising public health using temporary and possibly permanent installations within an urban setting.

Ideas Competition:

Working in partnership with the City of Baltimore, the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC), and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH) experts and local stakeholders, NDC is seeking tactical concepts for innovative urban public space configurations for maintaining safety and social distancing while patronizing businesses. They must address the needs of food service, retail, and other service industries. The designs must be situated in outdoor public spaces and cost less than \$100,000 to install. The competition runs May 29 to June 3. With \$50,000 available in stipends, the top concepts will be announced on June 8. The competition application and its guidelines are available on the Design for Distancing [website](#).

A digital Guidebook will contain the selected designs along with additional resources including signage for printing. It will be free for download to anyone in the world to utilize by the end of June. The awardees from the ideas competition designers may apply to participate in the physical implementation in Baltimore but are not required to do so.

Project Implementation

In July, public space reconfigurations will be implemented across more than a dozen Baltimore City districts, including current and former Main Streets, Retail Business Licensing Districts (RBLD), and Arts & Entertainment Districts identified as priority areas for the Small Business Assistance Fund grant program. Each district will be paired with a local design-build team to scope, develop, and implement the concepts. Design-build teams will be offered a \$10,000 design stipend and the construction will be funded through the Baltimore Development Corporation. The design build application and its guidelines are available [online](#).

“Over the next few months, cities around the world will be working to develop innovative solutions that safely allow their economies and public lives to open up again. Baltimore has the opportunity to not only support its own incredible small business community, but also be a leader in creating new urban models for social distancing while patronizing businesses,” said Jennifer Goold, Executive Director of the Neighborhood Design Center. “We are looking for creative design submissions from local agencies and freelancers, even if they don’t have the capacity to implement their creation. These concepts will then be built in Baltimore and shared with others around the world to borrow from in order to create their own practical solutions.”

“In Baltimore, the streets, sidewalks and stoops are important gathering spaces, and in many ways the intersection of our lives. Recapturing these areas is critical to our reopening and

economic recovery but it must be done in a creative and safe use of space. This is a special chance to show these spaces love and keep our citizens safe in order to support activities like lining up for restaurant carry-out, patronizing farmer's markets, and waiting outside of barbershops and salons, laundromats, and banks all while using public health best practices," said Mayor Young. "We have the most capable and brightest public health experts, designers, makers, and innovators living and working in Baltimore City. We are well poised to lead the world in this way.

"Reopening in a manner consistent with public health best practices will require businesses to make significant adjustments to their operation and capacity," said Colin Tarbert, president and CEO of BDC. "BDC's goal is to support small businesses by assisting them to adapt to these social distancing guidelines by reconfiguring public spaces to maximize outdoor seating and waiting areas as they reopen."

To learn more about BDC's larger efforts, visit <https://www.baltimoretogether.com>, a repository of information and resources for both residents and businesses that is continuously updated as new information becomes available. Design for Distancing: Reopening Baltimore Together is a \$1.5 million investment from Baltimore City's COVID-19 Small Business Assistance Initiative.

About Baltimore Development Corporation

The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) is the economic development agency for the City of Baltimore. Its mission is to grow the city's economy in an inclusive manner by retaining, expanding and attracting businesses and promoting investment, thereby increasing career opportunities for residents.

About Neighborhood Design Center

Since 1968, Neighborhood Design Center (NDC) has helped low and moderate income communities build new playgrounds, reclaim abandoned buildings and vacant lots, develop affordable housing, revitalize commercial districts and create neighborhood master plans. With offices in the Station North area of Baltimore and in Hyattsville, Maryland, NDC's assistance strengthens civic participation in development initiatives, educates the public about the value of good design, planning and preservation as community revitalization tools, and increases investment in the responsive rebuilding of neighborhoods. Learn more at <https://ndc-md.org/>.

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